

February 10, 2015

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS PRH CHANGE NOTICE NO. 14-12
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: LENITA JACOBS-SIMMONS
National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Changes to Policy and Handbook Requirements (PRH) Chapter 5
Appendices Regarding Continuous Improvement Plans

1. Purpose. To establish usage of the new term “Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)” in place of “Performance Improvement Plan (PIP),” to best describe the process of improving performance in Career Technical Training (CTT) programs.
2. Background. For many years, the term “Performance Improvement Plan” within the Job Corps community has been associated with CTT programs, as well as other aspects of the program related to low-performing centers or programming in general. As required by the PRH, mandatory PIPs are focused on improving low-performing, “D”-rated trade programs.

After review of Program Year (PY) 2011 and PY 2012 PIPs, as well as an audit by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), it became evident that there was a high level of variability across regions and centers in terms of both the process and documentation associated with PIPs. The Office of Job Corps has taken a number of steps to address these variances to include:

- Implementing the use of standardized templates to promote consistency in improving poor-performing CTT programs;
- Requiring centers to conduct Root Cause Analysis (RCA) to identify the behaviors, actions and/or conditions that need to be changed to improve a program’s performance; and
- Requiring centers to develop at least one annual “S.M.A.R.T.” (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, Timebound) goal for the underachieving program, and establish quarterly benchmarks.

As a part of the efforts to address these variances, moving forward, the acronym PIP is to be associated with a center-wide performance improvement initiative which is under development.

3. Explanation of Change(s). In order to ensure clear distinction in the intent of the term “Performance Improvement Plan,” the National Office has adopted a new term, “Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP),” to describe the focused process of improving performance in CTT programs, a critical component of overall center success. This language is consistent with the guidance and tone provided to the field related to S.M.A.R.T. goals. It reflects a positive intent to identify the core of the problem in terms of the CTT program’s performance, and to identify a specific, measurable goal to track progress.

While the focus of the process is currently on “D” level programs, the same process can be used to improve all programs (e.g., “C to B” and “B to A”), thereby strengthening the performance of the entire Job Corps system. The term “Continuous Improvement Plan” is widely used in secondary and post-secondary education, but with a particular focus on low-performing schools. Many states have adopted the term, and extensive research has been done on the effectiveness of the approach. Adopting the term as it relates to career technical training in Job Corps is consistent with other standards-based education and training systems.

All references to the term “Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)” for CTT programs have been replaced with the new term “Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)” in the following sections of the PRH:

Chapter 5, Appendix 501:

- Section E. “Additional Policies” / 7
- Attachment 6. “PY 2014 Job Corps CTT Report Card Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)”
- Attachment 7. “PY 2014 Job Corps CTT Report Card Regional Office Appeal Form”

Chapter 5, Appendix 501d:

- Section I. “Career Technical Training (CTT) Report Card for PY 2014” / H-I
- Section II. “Roles and Responsibilities” / B-D

4. Action Required. Addressees are to ensure this Change Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.

5. Effective Date. Immediately.

6. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to Tracy Bradshaw-Morris at (202) 693-8000

or bradshaw-morris.tracy@dol.gov.

Attachments

A – PRH Appendix 501 Introduction

B – PRH Appendix 501d